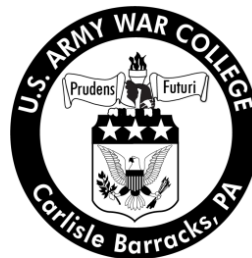


# Strategy Research Project International Fellow

## Malaysia –U.S. Relations: Influencing Factors and its Impact on Malaysia

by

Brigadier General Adnan Abu Bakar  
Malaysian Army



United States Army War College  
Class of 2013

### DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: A

Approved for Public Release  
Distribution is Unlimited

### COPYRIGHT STATEMENT:

The author is not an employee of the United States government.  
Therefore, this document may be protected by copyright law.

This manuscript is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
<p>The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. <b>PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.</b></p>					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) xx-03- 2013		2. REPORT TYPE STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Malaysia –U.S. Relations: Influencing Factors and its Impact on Malaysia				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Brigadier General Adnan Abu Bakar Malaysian Army				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Captain James E. Boswell School of Strategic Landpower				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Word Count: 5766					
14. ABSTRACT <p>The relations between nation-states encompass interactions between state-based actors across state boundaries. This situation raises a few questions: What are the factors that have characterized the relations between Malaysia and the U.S. as a combination of criticism and cooperation? What are the impacts of these relations on Malaysia? How best can understanding of the influencing factors be used to improve future relations? This paper will provide a critical study on the Malaysia-U.S. relations to determine factors influencing the relationships between the two states and their impact on Malaysia in post September 11 era for better relations in the future. The central argument of this is that the historical sources, internal and external sources as well as the idiosyncrasies of the leaders are factors that influence and impact the relations between the two states. These factors can be used to devise policies to better the relationship between the two states.</p>					
15. SUBJECT TERMS International Relation and Policy Formulation					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT  UU	18. NUMBER OF PAGES  32	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU	c. THIS PAGE UU			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)



# USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

## **Malaysia –U.S. Relations: Influencing Factors and its Impact on Malaysia**

by

Brigadier General Adnan Abu Bakar  
Malaysian Army

Captain James E. Boswell  
School of Strategic Landpower  
Project Adviser

This manuscript is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

U.S. Army War College  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013



## **Abstract**

Title: Malaysia –U.S. Relations: Influencing Factors and its Impact on Malaysia

Report Date: March 2013

Page Count: 32

Word Count: 5766

Key Terms: International Relation and Policy Formulation

Classification: Unclassified

The relations between nation-states encompass interactions between state-based actors across state boundaries. This situation raises a few questions: What are the factors that have characterized the relations between Malaysia and the U.S. as a combination of criticism and cooperation? What are the impacts of these relations on Malaysia? How best can understanding of the influencing factors be used to improve future relations? This paper will provide a critical study on the Malaysia-U.S. relations to determine factors influencing the relationships between the two states and their impact on Malaysia in post September 11 era for better relations in the future. The central argument of this is that the historical sources, internal and external sources as well as the idiosyncrasies of the leaders are factors that influence and impact the relations between the two states. These factors can be used to devise policies to better the relationship between the two states.





## **Malaysia –U.S. Relations: Influencing Factors and its Impact on Malaysia**

The relations between nation-states encompass interactions between state-based actors across state boundaries.<sup>1</sup> These relations hinge on many factors and impact many areas. For example, the momentous changes in Eastern Europe since 1989 at the end of the Cold War and the incident of September 11 have transformed the international relations, politics and security relation of states.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, due to these events, the relations of Malaysia-United States of America (U.S.) have also encountered changes whereby Malaysia's relations with the U.S. have been inconsistent and defined as "combination of criticism and cooperation" events. This situation raises a few questions: What are the factors that have caused these "inconsistencies" in relations between the Malaysia and the U.S.? What are the impacts of these relations on Malaysia? How best can the understanding of the influencing factors be used to improve future relations?

This paper will provide a critical study on the Malaysia-U.S. relationship to determine the factors influencing the relationships of the two states and its impact on Malaysia in post September 11 era for better relations in the future. The central argument of this paper is that the historical sources, internal and external sources as well as the idiosyncrasies of the leaders are factors that influence and impact on the relationship between the two states. Also, these factors determine the well being of the relationship between the two states.

The conceptual approach of this paper uses James N. Rosenau (1971) pioneering works and invaluable theoretical construct as a tool for identification and analysis of major variables of foreign policy adaptation by Malaysia and the U.S. vis-à-vis security policy.<sup>3</sup> This paper looks into Rosenau's five sets of variable: idiosyncratic

namely the behavior traits unique to each decision-maker, role or behavior generated by the decision-making role, governmental or structural restraints to policy choices, societal and systematic or environmental influences on state behavior. Based on these variables and work by J. Saravanamuttu (1983), this paper dwells on four sets of sources to identify Malaysia-U.S. security relations in the pre and post September 11 period.<sup>4</sup> First, the paper will highlight the background of relations between Malaysia-U.S.. This will be followed by discussion of the historical perspective and internal sources influencing the security policies of both the countries pre and post September 11. Next, the paper will examine the external and idiosyncratic sources of Malaysian and U.S. interaction. Finally, after examining the impact of September 11, the paper will end by attempting to provide some thoughts on whether the historical sources, internal and external factors as well as idiosyncrasies of the leaders in both the states has or could influence the relations between the two states and their future relations.

#### Background of Malaysia-United States Relations

The Malaysia-U.S. relationship has been marked by political divergence, although pragmatic economic relationships and bilateral informal security relationships prevail. This divergence of viewpoints was exacerbated by idiosyncrasies of political leaders of both countries. Although the idiosyncrasies of both states' leaders caused the ups and downs in their relationship, the common security threat after the September 11 incident has now forced them to trade some of their cultural egocentric interests for the sake of their states' national interest. September 11 left Malaysia and U.S. with a common enemy.

The U.S. continues to be an important actor in the region. Being a dominant superpower, it affects the security environment in the Southeast Asia region through the

implementation of its foreign and security policies. Undeniably, these policies have an impact on Malaysia and its relationship with the U.S. However, the U.S. cannot take for granted its regional leadership role and must expect to operate in a more multilateral framework involving other assertive actors.<sup>5</sup> Malaysia being a member of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) is seen as having an assertive role to play in the leadership and influencing role among the Muslim countries. With the main threat of terrorism stemming from the Al-Qaeda organization who claims themselves as an Islamic organization, there is a need for close security relations between the U.S. and Malaysia in order to combat the threat of terrorism. Therefore, it is pertinent for this paper to identify the factors affecting Malaysia and the U.S. relationship in post September 11 era in order for the two countries to forge cordial and productive relations in the future.

### Historical Sources

The first factor that influences the Malaysia-U.S relationship is historical sources. The historical approach dwells on chronological readings of policies from one leader to another. In this process the history, cultures, geography, race endowment and other “background” factors influencing the Malaysia-U.S. relationship form the historical sources to allow us to draw inferences about their impact on future relations.

The historical sources on Malaysia reflect that the history of Malaysia is an offshoot of the history of the wider Malay world.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, there is a strong interlink between Malaysia’s multi-racial and multicultural make-up and its history.<sup>7</sup> Its complex cultural diversity can be largely attributed to the country’s long and on-going interaction with outside world and colonial rule by the Portuguese, Dutch and the British. Consequently, the evolution that made the country into a cultural “melting pot”<sup>8</sup> is

evident in the unique blend of religions, socio-cultural activities, languages and food. Also, Malaysia's geographical position places it in a natural meeting place of trade routes and cultures that has brought the area great wealth, but has also made it difficult for Malaysia to resist foreign influence and domination. The shipping route has made Malaysia an important Sea Line of Communication (SLOC) in Southeast Asia.

On the other hand, the historical sources on U.S. indicate that from the declaration of Independence in 1776 until just before the Civil War in the 1880s, the U.S. was a country of Anglo Saxon stock and Protestant religion.<sup>9</sup> The population was of overwhelmingly British origin. By the end of this period, due to famine and political upheaval, an increasing numbers of Irish and Germans entered America.<sup>10</sup> Just before the Civil War was a period of massive immigration that reached its peak in the period 1890 to 1914. Most of these immigrants were Irish, Italian, Slav and Jewish whose religions were Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Jewish. Over a few decades, the U.S. was transformed from an Anglo-America Protestant society into a multi-denominational Euro-America society. A policy of assimilation was applied because of the belief in the creed and institutions of liberal democracy; this is how the U.S. became known as the great melting pot, evoking the symbolism of the Statue of Liberty.<sup>11</sup> The next great adaptations took place during the 1960's. An extension of genuine political rights (access to the political creed) took place to include the U.S. black population. Immigration was opened up to include people of all races and ethnic composition namely Hispanic, Asians, Africans, people from the Caribbean and Arabs. As a result, the accepted metaphor the American society has become "not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic".<sup>12</sup> The old melting pot ideal was now increasingly condemned by some

as authoritarian and conformist. The theory and practice of multi-culturalism began to prevail. Instead of assimilation, diversity and variety represented the ideal.<sup>13</sup>

Consequently, these changes have an effect of the U.S.'s relationships with other states.

At the end of World War 2, the Japanese surrendered in August 1945 and the British forces returned to Malaya (in 1963 Malaya was known as Malaysia after Sabah and Sarawak joined the federation). After the independence of Malaya in 1957, Britain promised to provide mutual aid in the event of an armed attack on either Malayan or British possessions in the Far East by introducing the Anglo-Malayan Defense Agreement (AMDA). It was through AMDA then that Malaya came under the indirect protection of the U.S. led Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) with reference to the British membership. After that, Malaya had a more direct political relationship with the U.S., however, in the sector of defense-security cooperation the United Kingdom continued to chart the course with the U.S.. The former assumed responsibility with its Commonwealth partners in the Far East namely Australia and New Zealand under the triangular arrangement of ANZUS-ANZUK-AMDA and also through the continued operation of the SEATO pact.<sup>14</sup>

The U.S. had wanted Malaya to join SEATO but unfortunately, at that time, the United Malay National Organization (UMNO) of the ruling Alliance Party then did not accept AMDA.<sup>15</sup> However, with the security relationship progressing, the Malaya-U.S. trade relations began to improve with the signing of an investment guarantee agreement on 21 April 1959 between both states under the United States Mutual Security Act of 1954. The legislature established a Mutual Security Programme (MSP) with provisions

for the extension of military, economic and technical assistance to other countries.<sup>16</sup>

Malaya's trade and economic relations with U.S. during this period must also be viewed against the backdrop of the Cold War struggle. The "containment policy" theme by the U.S. indicates that the U.S. foreign relation with Malaysia was founded on the basis of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry and ideological differences. Discussions on the Malaysia-U.S. relationship during this period had always taken into account the geopolitics and strategic considerations for security as well as protection from the communism threat.

#### Internal Sources

The second factor that influences the Malaysia-U.S. relationship is internal sources. The internal sources refer to the domestic influences of actors and factors operating within Malaysia and the U.S. national boundaries. These domestic influences revolved around the societal, political, economic and governmental bureaucratic processes within both the states.

A brief survey of the Malaysia-U.S. internal sources in the past points out that bilateral security cooperation between both countries was very close due to the common perception of security threat both faced in pre and post September 11. It could be contended that the containment of communism dominated the American's relations with Malaya during the Cold War period.<sup>17</sup> The increasing interest of U.S. in the state of Malaya was due to three major issues. First, it could be related to the Malayan Emergency.<sup>18</sup> This involved Washington's preoccupation in the global fight against communism. Second, the nationalist movements which were in line with U.S. foreign policy of encouraging self-determination as a device to drive back the idea of communism. And thirdly, the U.S. required strategic raw materials for the Korean War found in the Malaya's tin and rubber supplies.<sup>19</sup> During this period, the Malaysia-U.S.

relationship was mainly focused on defense through Anglo-American cooperation in the anti-communist alliance, SEATO, led by the U.S..

The Malaya-U.S. political-military relations became more direct following the formation of Malaysia, especially after British's decision to withdraw its forces from the east of Suez. Throughout the Cold War, instability in Indochina kept both countries focused on the potential threats generated there that would threaten the stability of the region. Subsequently, the post-Cold War period saw the U.S. continuing economic-strategic interests in the Southeast Asian region and in particular, Malaysia. Concomitantly, it could be inferred that ASEAN countries acknowledged the importance of the U.S. military presence in the region to maintain regional stability. The Malaysia-U.S. security relation could be seen in a regional context within ASEAN of which Malaysia could be construed as a leading member.

#### External Sources

The third factor that influences the Malaysia-U.S. relationship is external sources. The external sources, as advocated by James Rosenau and Saravanamuttu, emanate from the Malaysian and U.S. external environment. These are influences which are the result of factors operating outside the national boundaries of both states.

The changes and shifts in foreign policy cannot be solely a function of domestic concerns and very often the change comes from the external environment of the state.<sup>20</sup> For example, during the era of Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak, Malaysia shifted to a more relaxed or co-operative orientation in its relations with the communist countries. This could have been due to the reduction of Western presence generally in Southeast Asia. Tun Abdul Razak's policy then was also a result of the British policy of withdrawal east of Suez and the Nixon Doctrine of disengagement from Southeast Asia.<sup>21</sup>

In substantive terms, Malaysia's foreign policy shifted from a pronounced pro-Western, anti-communist orientation to a more neutralist position, bolstered by such foreign policy strategies as the promotion of a "Zone of Peace Freedom and Neutrality" in Southeast Asia.<sup>22</sup> A further step toward neutralism came with the establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, a country that was until then considered Malaysia's number one external enemy.<sup>23</sup>

Regionally, in Southeast Asia, potential flash points from Spratly issues, overlapping claims, secessionist movements, territorial and border disputes are still a cause for concern. There are also other threats that could damage the security of Malaysia such as economic threats. War against neighbors though unlikely, should not be ruled out. In this aspect, ASEAN 10 and ASEAN + 3 have altered the strategic outlook of the region. The challenge is for its member states to give the highest priority in ensuring the integration and solidarity of the ASEAN framework. That being said, the September 11 incident has changed the U.S. stance on many issues especially its relations with states that supported as well as those that are against the Al-Qaeda group/organization. It was a turning point in world politics whereby the U.S. response to September 11 has resulted in a new assertiveness in U.S. foreign policy. These changes were clearly reflected in the article "*The war on terrorism and the Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations Vol. 4, No.1&2 Spring &Summer 2005 140*" that said struggle against the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction have become the central elements of the U.S. foreign policy.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, operations and involvements in the Middle East, from military to humanitarian, were colored with the slogan of bringing democracy to the region and "has emerged as



a central component of U.S. thinking in the reassessment of its security perceptions in the post 9/11 environment and looks to be a central factor for some time to come”.<sup>25</sup>

### Idiosyncratic Sources

The fourth factor that influences the Malaysia-U.S. is the idiosyncratic sources. Idiosyncratic sources refer to influences of individual or personality traits of policy makers; both in Malaysia and the U.S. during pre and post September 11 periods.

Viewing the past, the idiosyncrasy of Prime Minister Mahathir had created some ‘tension’ between Malaysia and the U.S.. Mahathir seemed to imply a Malaysian posture that placed western countries secondary to East Asian countries especially Japan and South Korea. The U.S. was against the vociferous character of Mahathir who stood firm in championing the grievances of the Third World countries under the Non Alignment Movement (NAM).<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the U.S. was also uncomfortable with Mahathir’s voice for the Muslim countries. Exacerbating the situation, the walking out from an official function by the Vice President of the U.S., Al Gore during his visit to Malaysia further indicates the strained relations between the two countries during that particular period of time.

The former Vice President of U.S. was on an official visit to Kuala Lumpur way back in 1998 during the internal strife between Prime Minister Mahathir and the Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. Apparently, he was not in favor of how things were going on as to the investigations and charges faced by the Deputy Premier. Vice President Gore’s behavior was against all norms of the Malaysian and Asian culture and values which limit openly voicing ones’ opinions about state matters, more so when it effects the ruling Government and its political parties. The ASEAN nation states had made a

stand very clearly that no internal matters of member states shall be deliberated and no interference shall be made between its' members.

The Malaysian leadership took deep personal offense from what the former Vice President had to say, even though it was his personal beliefs at that point in time. This eventually caused long term strain in diplomatic relations between Malaysia and U.S.. The Asian culture of keeping ones' personal opinion to one-self was badly soured so to speak, and it took some years for that incident to be forgotten and mending of cordial relationship between the two nations. By walking out in an official function, after giving his "two cents worth of very frank thoughts" Mr. Gore brought shame to the ruling party, as though the nation was a rogue state and unlawful country. It had tremendous implications worldwide when his statement was viewed worldwide the very same day, and put the Prime Minister in a defensive mode.

Despite Mahathir's frequently anti-western and anti-Semitic rhetoric, he worked closely with Western countries and led a crackdown against Islamic fundamentalists after the September 11 attacks. The change of leadership to Abdullah Ahmad Badawi saw improving relations between Malaysia and the U.S.. Having previously served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, he was tactful in handling issues especially in foreign relations.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, current Prime Minister Najib continues to establish thawing relations with the U.S. as evidenced by his invitation by President Obama to the Nuclear Security Summit on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, it could be seen that the idiosyncrasy of the Presidents and leaders in the U.S. had left behind numerous doctrines that had impacted its foreign policies and relations with other countries. For example, there were Wilsonism,

economism, realism, humanitarianism and minimalism, to name a few, being practiced at various times the Presidents and other U.S. leaders. To illustrate these: President Wilson coined Wilsonism in which the U.S. desired to see others adopt democracy, human rights and civil society; Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, was an idealist; Clinton preached on economism and a clear indication of militant unilateralism was seen during George W. Bush's administration. Currently, the foreign policy guiding principles of President Obama show the pursuit of national security policies that keep the American people safe while turning the page on a decade of war and restoring American leadership abroad.<sup>29</sup>

The brief survey of the Malaysia-U.S. external and idiosyncratic sources above leads to the analysis that bilateral security cooperation between both countries was close due to the convergence of the perception of security threat. However, occasional strained Malaysia-U.S. relationship occurred because of divergence in economic and political interests. For example, the occasion of the non- import of palm oil by the U.S. from Malaysia had strained the economic relations of both the countries.

(At one point in time, the London tin market released its stockpile in tandem with a rubber stockpile release, Malaysian traders suffered severe setbacks as prices plunged sharply, this was seen as an economic-espionage well planned by market players, rumored to be from Washington. It did not go down well with the Malaysian government causing strained relationships. There were also efforts by rich growers of corn and soya bean in the U.S. who began lobbying against palm cooking oils on the basis that they were unhealthy, these were not a welcome actions or Malaysian growers and producers)

## Impact of Post September 11 on the U.S. and Malaysia Relationship and Recommendations

Based on the factors analyzed and described above, it could be seen that the historical and internal factors expounded by James Rosenau and Saravanmuttu could effectively be used to examine the interactions between Malaysia and the U.S. in their relations both in pre and post September 11. The domestic and influences of internal factors such as the U.S. strong domestic influence in its political decisions has also shaped the past and present Malaysia-U.S. relations. Hence, it can be inferred that the external factors and idiosyncrasy of the leaders of both countries are indeed influencing factors in determining the relationship. The geopolitical factors of Malaysia's strategic location within the spheres of interest and influence in the region could be considered external sources. The great power rivalries and competition, regional military conflicts and alliances saw the U.S. establishing cordial relations with many countries in this region. These clearly comply with James Rosenau and Saravanamuttu's theoretical construct of factors that shape the U.S. and Malaysia foreign policy and affects their relationship.<sup>30</sup>

There are many crucial lessons to be learned from this systematic examination of factors which affect the Malaysian-U.S. relationship. Described below are recommended processes, programs, exercises, interactions, and arrangements that might alleviate past misunderstandings, cultural biases, faulty mental frameworks, or inform unintentional ignorance to improve future relationships of the U.S. and Malaysia. Foremost, the conduct of Malaysia Foreign Policy has to a large extent been determined by forces other than Islam. Malaysia Foreign Policy and security has lineage and similarities to Western ideas due to "historical" factors as expounded by James N.

Rosenau the earlier Malaysian Constitution for instance was drawn from experience gained from the independence of Malaysia from the British. The government system is similar to that during the British Era. Even in the military, the military law was initially based on the Queen's Regulations and had evolved into Malaysia's own Armed Forces Act of 1972. The first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman was apparently compelled by pragmatic necessities not to subscribe to Islamic principles and objectives in foreign policies practice. Islam could hardly emerge as a dominant force in Malaysia Foreign Policy where foreign policy goals were determined by domestic context.

Nevertheless, between 1981-1986, Dr Mahathir's placement of OIC and "pan-Islaminism" at the second-rung of Malaysia Foreign Policy priority-list indicated the commitment to the use of Islam as important policy tool to help protect, promote and secure Malaysia's national interest within the international world of Islam. The primary objectives of Malaysia Islamic diplomacy were firstly, the pursuit of Malaysian core-value objectives of socio-political, economy and religious stability internally that encompasses defusing of fundamentalist-extremist threats. Secondly, the pursuit of the "status-oriented" objective of image enhancement within the Islamic world through supporting Islamic causes within the region and internationally. Malaysia's strategy and approach to secure these objectives were through the interrelated policy actions of multilateral instruments of the OIC and bilateral country-to-country basis with members of the Islamic 'Ummah' directed at Arab and non-Arab Muslim nations alike.

The impact of September 11 has resulted in Malaysia trying to take concerted efforts and approaches in fighting terrorists and militants among the OIC members. Consequently, Malaysia has been at the forefront of prosecuting terrorists within the

region. This resulted in the capture of Philippine terrorists in Malaysia and the subsequent arrests of Al-Qaeda-linked terrorist cells in Malaysia and Singapore.

Next is the impact on Malaysia's political, economy and defense due to relations of Malaysia with the U.S. in the post September 11 era. Vice President Al Gore's public support of the former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's reformist movement in 1998; the conviction and imprisonment of former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim in 1999 for corruption; and the inflammatory rhetoric of Prime Minister Mahathir have all had a chilling effect on Malaysia-U.S. political dialogue at the highest levels as well as cooperation at the working level of both governments that impacted on the national interest of both the countries. The threats of terrorism paved the way to improve Malaysia-U.S. bilateral ties by focusing on regional issues as both share regional concerns that can be pursued in a cooperative way. Malaysia is a leading voice in ASEAN. It is also a strong example of the social and economic success possible in a multiracial society that has a moderate Islamic majority. As such, Malaysia must be supported and encouraged by the U.S. to play a more constructive role in the region. As the post September 11 era has galvanized Malaysia and the U.S. in having strong cooperation on transnational issues such as counter-terrorism, this cooperation should be expanded as a means of improving the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

As far as the impact on economy is concerned, prior to September 11, Malaysia's economic relationship with the U.S. was faced with ups and downs. This at the time was linked to Mahathir's idiosyncratic anti-Western rhetoric. After September 11, based on the sharing of intelligence, the Thai Police were able to capture Riduan Isamuddin, a.k.a

Hambali who was planning an attack against the October 2003 APEC summit in Bangkok. The seriousness of Malaysia and the other countries in ASEAN in tackling the threat of terrorism and the extremist groups was acknowledged by the U.S.<sup>31</sup> As a result, the security and economic relation has changed for the betterment for Malaysia and the U.S..

Opening foreign markets remains an important U.S. objective.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, in post September 11, Malaysia continues to move in the direction of market-oriented economic reform in order to attract capital and technology to grow its economy and support its Vision 2020.<sup>33</sup> To achieve these objectives, Malaysia needs technical assistance, especially in the rapidly developing areas of the services economy. Many of these key services areas such as finance services and telecommunications are sectors where the U.S. is the world leader. This environment creates a win-win opportunity for both the U.S. and Malaysia that can be realized through better utilization of U.S. technical assistance.

A Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Malaysia and the U.S.<sup>34</sup> will further strengthen trade relationship and lay foundation for increased business collaboration and mutually benefit both countries. Malaysia could use the FTA to address market access measures that could facilitate trade and investment as well as enhance economic cooperation in areas of mutual interest. It would also look at the regulatory barriers in doing business between the two countries. This Malaysia-U.S. FTA is expected to move forward in consonance with a better Malaysia-U.S. relationship in the post September 11 era.<sup>35</sup>

The trade and investment links between Malaysia and the U.S. are supported by business organizations that are active in both countries such as the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council and the U.S.- Malaysia Business Council based in Washington D.C., the American Malaysian Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) and the Malaysian American Electronic Cooperation (MAEI) based in Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia and the U.S. are also working closely in multilateral forums such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). The above indicates that the post September 11 period has garnered better cooperation and trust between both the countries that generated better bilateral trade relation of the two countries.

As for defense, Malaysian and U.S. forces have cooperated on a wide range of missions without much public acknowledgement.<sup>36</sup> Malaysia forces regularly conduct joint training with U.S. counterparts. Similarly, the U.S. routinely enjoys access to Malaysian airfields and ports. An example is the call at Malaysia's Port Klang by the U.S.S Ronald Reagan.<sup>37</sup> This close cooperation is reflected particularly in more than 75 U.S. military ship visits in the past two and a half years.<sup>38</sup> Malaysia also provides one of the few bases outside the U.S. for U.S. military jungle-warfare training. The U.S. troops are now warmly welcomed in Malaysia to conduct training and vice versa under the U.S.-Malaysia Defence Program.<sup>39</sup> Recently, the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency and the Malaysia Joint Force Headquarters conducted a Consequence Management Assistance Program Workshop in Kuala Lumpur from 9 to 11 July 2012.

The cooperation between the two countries started well before September 11 attacks. The post September 11 period saw the relationship between Malaysia and U.S. galvanized as never before. Malaysia has condemned the attack very vocally and has



provided an elevated level of cooperation with the U.S. Since September 11, the U.S. is now given excellent access to Malaysian intelligence. Malaysian forces have been protecting ships in the Strait of Malacca and southern of South China Sea. Malaysia has also a considerable number of troops and military assets on its islands to thwart the threat of Abu Sayyaf terrorists in Southern Philippines. In addition, post September 11 also saw Malaysia actively identifying assets of terrorists and collaborating with other ASEAN countries to freeze their assets.

In the new strategic landscape of the world post September 11, Malaysia could offer the world and the U.S. a few pertinent positions. First, Malaysia is resolute and steadfast in fighting all forms of terrorism in Malaysia and is committed to supporting the global war against terrorism. Second, Malaysia is a model of an Islamic nation that is moderate, progressive and tolerant; constant with modernity; and more importantly, a model that has succeeded in a multiracial, religious and cultural setting. Third, Malaysia is playing a key role in Southeast Asia to promote peace and stability as exemplified by Malaysia's role in supporting the peace process in the southern Philippines (International Monitoring Team) and ensuring the territorial integrity of Indonesia. Fourth, Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib as a statesman and Muslim leader lends a credible voice of reason, moderation, pragmatism and progress to eliminate terror and to achieve a more prosperous and peaceful world.

The seriousness of the impact of September 11 to the security and defense of Malaysia could also be seen in the setting up of the Southeast Asia Regional Center for Counterterrorism (SEARCCT). It reflects Malaysia's role in the region to reduce terrorism and conflicts. For this commitment, the U.S. has renewed its defense pact with

Malaysia where in May 2005, the U.S. Deputy of State Robert Zoellick witnessed the renewal of the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), a ten-year military logistic cooperation pact.<sup>40</sup> The thawing relations also saw the U.S. Secretary of State's visit to Malaysia in November 2010. All in all, it is recommended that the positive measures undertaken by both the U.S. and Malaysia in the post September 11 era must continue to ensure cordial relations between the two states.

### Conclusion

Malaysia's relationship with the U.S. in the pre September 11 era had been clouded by verbal battles between the two countries. Malaysia fought against the U.S. attempts to impose rights and values on Asia and the Third World in general. These feelings have affected Malaysia's view of the U.S. security role in the region. Nevertheless, Malaysia supported the conventional wisdom that the presence of U.S. in Southeast Asia was necessary for security in the post Cold War world. There were an increasing number of U.S. warships visiting Malaysian ports. This could be postulated to be due to the increasing interest of the U.S. in playing a bigger security role in this region as well as increasing interest by American firms in Malaysia's economic opportunities.

The U.S. Foreign Policy has changed in significant ways throughout its history. The emergence of the U.S. as a world power and its successful interventions in both the World Wars coupled with the pressing demands of the Cold War had forced the U.S. to abandon its isolationist tradition and to assert itself globally. The end of the Cold war followed by the September 11 incident has caused another shift. Each of these periods was initiated by external events (sources), these shifts were also affected by parallel changes in the domestic environment (internal sources). The greater impact of internal

sources is both a cause and a result, of the shift in the foreign policy decision-making process and its relations with other states. The U.S. foreign policy has increasingly shown the incredible pluralism inherent in the U.S. society. It exemplifies the constantly evolving amalgamation of political alliances, interest groups and government institutions that make up the U.S. society.

The September 11 attacks have impacted not only on U.S. but also other countries in the world such as the Muslim countries. It has disrupted economic activity around the world. In the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, there is a need for a clear and coherent U.S. foreign policy to govern its relations with other states. The source and intention of the attacks were linked with Islamic extremism. Thus, a worldwide coalition of states and international organizations were created to counter the challenge to this threat. This cooperation resulted in close links between international security and the U.S. foreign policy that affect its relations with other states; those for the U.S. as well as those against the U.S..

The September 11 attacks reveal the interdependent nature of policy-making environment. It has tested and strained U.S. bilateral relationships with other states. Consensus has to be attained on foreign policy that would serve to unify the various approaches practiced by the U.S. such as isolationism, internationalism, realism, idealism, unilateralism and multilateralism. This would provide future leaders of the U.S. ways to adapt to the ever-changing fluid environment. More importantly, it should enable them to incorporate the diversity of goals and opinions that emerge in the decision-making process. Additionally, it is advocated that a multilateral cooperation approach through the UN and military pact are viable options to be implemented.

The September 11 attacks have also impacted Malaysia in many aspects. The political and economic relations with U.S. have improved. The defense and security cooperation by both countries have also improved due to the need to fight the common enemy (terrorism). This common focus helped in fostering better understanding of the need for bilateral and multilateral arrangements between the U.S. with Malaysia and the other countries in the region.

Amongst the most promising methods for the U.S. and Malaysia to clarify and stabilize their relations is for the U.S. to take cognizance of her own superpower status and huge economy/market and at the same time take advantage of the strategic location of Malaysia in Southeast Asia. The resources, sharing of expertise and collaboration would intensify economic activity and expand trade and investment opportunities. These opportunities could be garnered from a safe and secure environment through defense and security arrangements by both countries. At the same time Malaysia could leverage the network connectivity of both countries to establish mutual military support as well as to enable new and emerging markets. There is still an array of services which both countries could collaborate and trade in. These areas are information and communications technology and ICT-related services, out-sourcing, education and health. The U.S. economy also offers opportunities for Malaysian and U.S. companies to explore collaborative initiatives in many areas. That being said, the Malaysia-U.S. relations will continue to improve with both countries viewing terrorist acts from extremist groups as a threat to their national interests in the post September 11 era.

Other promising methods for U.S. and Malaysia to stabilize their relations is by looking at cooperation between both the countries in terms of political, economic and defense relations. The status of Malaysia-U.S. relations could be attributed mainly to the influence of the idiosyncrasy of its leaders as well as from the eco-historical, internal and external sources as expounded by James Rosenau and Saravanamuttu. These factors form the basis of analysis for policies formulation involving foreign policy, security policies, international political economy and others that could enhance Malaysia-U.S. relations in the future. All in all, a better understanding of the historical, internal sources, external sources and idiosyncrasies factors can be used to devise policies to better the relationship between the two states.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> G. Evans & J. Newnham, *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations* (Penguin Group, 1998), 274.

<sup>2</sup> P. Sodhy, *The Malaysia-U.S. Nexus: Themes in Superpower-Small State Relations* (ISIS Malaysia 1991), 98.

<sup>3</sup> James N. Rosenau, *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy*, (Free Press, New York 1971), 95-150.

<sup>4</sup> J. Saravanamuttu, *The Dilemma of Independence: Two decades of Malaysia's Foreign Policy 1957-1977*, (Universiti Sains Malaysia for School of Social Sciences 1983), 23-56.

<sup>5</sup> J Kurlantzick, U.S. Strategic Signal in South East Asia, 10 Jul 2012, <http://www.cfr.org/southeast-asia/us-strategic-signals-southeast-asia/p28685> (27 October 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Zainal Abidin Abdul Wahid, *Glimpses of Malaysian History*, (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1970), 1-6.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 6-13.

<sup>8</sup> A place where different peoples, different styles, different theories etc are mixed together.

<sup>9</sup> O. Harries, "Understanding America," 4 March 2002 [http://www.cis.org.au/Events/CISlectures/2002/Harries\\_030402.htm](http://www.cis.org.au/Events/CISlectures/2002/Harries_030402.htm) (accessed 13 October 2012)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid..

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> This quote is about multiculturalism. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams-Jimmy Carter ([www.searchquotes.com/quotes/author/Jimmy\\_Carter](http://www.searchquotes.com/quotes/author/Jimmy_Carter)).

<sup>13</sup> *Understanding America* <http://www.cis.org.au/Events/CISlectures/2002/Harries030402.htm> (accessed 13 October 2012).

<sup>14</sup> AMDA was later evolving into Five Power Defense Arrangement (FPDA) in 1971, which comprises Malaysia, Singapore, Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

<sup>15</sup> J. Saravanamuttu, *The Dilemma of Independence*, 23.

<sup>16</sup> P. Sodhy, *The Malaysia-U.S. Nexus*, 189.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> First Malayan Emergency against the communist insurgency (1948-1960).

<sup>19</sup> P. Sodhy, *The Malaysia-U.S. Nexus*, 142-176.

<sup>20</sup> H.H. Lentner, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, (Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, Ohio, 1974), 3.

<sup>21</sup> Diane K. Mauzy and Brian L. Job., *The U.S. Policy in Southeast Asia," Limited Re-engagement after Years of Benign Neglect* (Asian Survey, 2007), 623.

<sup>22</sup> ASEAN proposed the concept of "Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality" (ZOPFAN) in Southeast Asia, in order to protect their safety and independence and avoid the intervention by big powers.

<sup>23</sup> Diane K. Mauzy and Brian L. Job., *The U.S. Policy in Southeast Asia*, 623.

<sup>24</sup> A. Cottey, *September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 One Year on: A new Era in World Politics?* (Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relation 1 (3), Fall 2002, 1-2.

<sup>25</sup> D. Neep, *Dilemmas of Democratization in the Middle East: The Forward Strategy of Freedom* (Middle East Policy 11 (3), Fall 2004, 75.

<sup>26</sup> The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a group of states which are not aligned formally with or against any major power bloc. As of 2012, the movement has 120 members (including Palestine) and 17 observer countries.

<sup>27</sup> *Foreign Relations of Malaysia*, <http://foreign-relations-of-malaysia.iqnaut.net>, (accessed 24 October 2012)

<sup>28</sup> W.Wong, *Johan Saravanamuttu on Malaysia's foreign policies under Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak*. 15 Feb 2011, <http://www.dinmerican.wordpress.com/2011/05/15/johan-saravanamuttuom-malaysias-foreign-policy> (accessed 27 October 2012).

<sup>29</sup> The White House Washington, Foreign Policies Guiding Principles, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/foreign-policy> (accessed 27 October 2012)

<sup>30</sup> J. Saravanamuttu, *The Dilemma of Independence*, 23-56.

<sup>31</sup> Redirected from APEC summit, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation., [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia-Pacific\\_Economic\\_Cooperation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia-Pacific_Economic_Cooperation), (accessed 27 October 2012).

<sup>32</sup> John Goyer, *The ASEAN Region and its importance to the U.S.*, 22 February 2002, [http://www.us-asean.org/transition\\_paper\\_attachments.htm](http://www.us-asean.org/transition_paper_attachments.htm), (accessed 24 December 2012).

<sup>33</sup> Vision 2020 is a Malaysian ideal introduced by the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir bin Mohamad during the tabling of the Sixth Malaysia Plan in 1991. The vision calls for the nation to achieve a self-sufficient industrialized nation by the year 2020, encompasses all aspects of life, from economic prosperity, social well-being, educational world class, political stability, as well as psychological balance.

<sup>34</sup> The *Malaysia-US Free Trade Agreement* is a proposed treaty between Malaysia and the United States of America. The treaty aims to liberalize each other markets to parties of the agreement and directly encourage trade between the two countries.

<sup>35</sup> Dick K. Nanto, CRS Report for Congress, *The Proposed US-Malaysia Free Trade Agreement*, 22 Sep 2006, Library of Congress.fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/75262.pdf (27 October 2012).

<sup>36</sup> U.S.-Malaysia Defence Cooperation: A solid success story, *Malaysia Today*, 8 June 2006, [http://www.malaysia-today.net/english/Najib\\_Heritage.htm](http://www.malaysia-today.net/english/Najib_Heritage.htm), (accessed 24 December 2012).

<sup>37</sup> Space to spare, *New Sunday Times*, 4 June 2006, 24

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> The U.S. conducts training exercises with the Royal Malaysian Air Force, flying with and against them in mock battles; U.S. Navy SEALs conduct training in Malaysia twice a year; The U.S. Army does field exercises with the Malaysian Army for their expertise in jungle warfare; Malaysian defense personnel benefit from the U.S.-sponsored International Military Education and Training Programme.

<sup>40</sup> Editor, *Malaysia and US renew defence pact, discuss Malacca Strait security*, Defence Talk: Global Defence, Aerospace and Military Portal, 9 May 2005, <http://www.defencetalk.com/malaysia-and-us-renew-defence-pact-discuss-malacca-strait-security-3101/> (accessed 27 October 2012).

